American Missionary Association

Descriptive Sketch

By Charles J. Ryder

CONGREGATIONAL ROOMS,
FOURTH AVENUE AND TWENTY-SECOND STREET,
NEW YORK.

COURT SQUARE THEATRE, SPRINGFIELD MASS., WHERE THE 54TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION WAS HELD

THE AMERICAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION

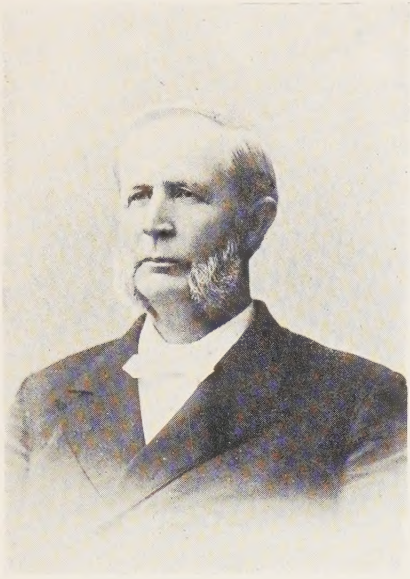
By Charles J. Ryder

THE fifty-fourth annual meeting of the American Missionary Association, held in Court Square Theatre, Springfield, Mass., on October 23-25 inclusive, was of especial interest, significance and importance. Indeed the work of few societies is so peculiar, picturesque and interesting as that presented in the field of this association.

The field now actually occupied by the schools, churches and missions of this association reaches from Porto Rico to Alaska and from Savannah to San Francisco. From southeast to northwest the region along which these missions stand as lighthouses is nearly eight thousand miles. From the warm regions of the tropics where luxuriant fruit grows throughout the whole year, far away to the extreme north where rigorous winter holds the country bound in ice through many months stretches the field occupied by the association.

The peculiarities of the people represented in this field are as great as those of climate. In its schools and missions there were represented last year eleven different races. Among these were descendants of Africans, Mongolians, Anglo-Saxons, Indians and Eskimos. Here are the Porto Ricans, nearly a million of them, just coming out of four hundred years of great depression under the rule of Spain. These people need especially to be taught that which shall prepare them for the responsibilities of American citizenship. To this island the association therefore sends its missionaries, occupying regions largely un-

REV. FRANKLIN A. NOBLE, D.D., PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION



CHARLES A. HULL, CHAIRMAN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AMERICAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION

reached by other organizations and establishing work that will mean great things in the future.

Great care was taken in planting the schools in this island not to interfere with the work of any other organization and not to duplicate that which was being done by others. Two schools were opened, one at the north and one in the heart of the island, and the first year's enrollment was about three hundred interesting Porto Rican children. A general missionary occupied preaching stations in the east of the island, reaching a population of something like 75,000 people, among whom there was no other Protestant missionary. When we remember that 85 per cent. of the total population of this island are unable to read and write in any language, the importance of the educational work is emphasized. The "shack people," as they are called, representing the humbler and poorer class, are welcomed to these mission schools. American patriotism has received its emphasis in the work of these schools. Washington and Lincoln Memorial Days were observed by the pupils, and special attention was given to the lives and work of these two great Americans. The children of the school joined in singing "My Country 'Tis of Thee," perhaps the first time this patriotic American song was sung by the children of Porto Rico in any gathering of this kind.

DAVID FLYINGHAWK, CHAIRMAN LOOKOUT COMMITTEE, SANTEE ENDEAVOR SOCIETY

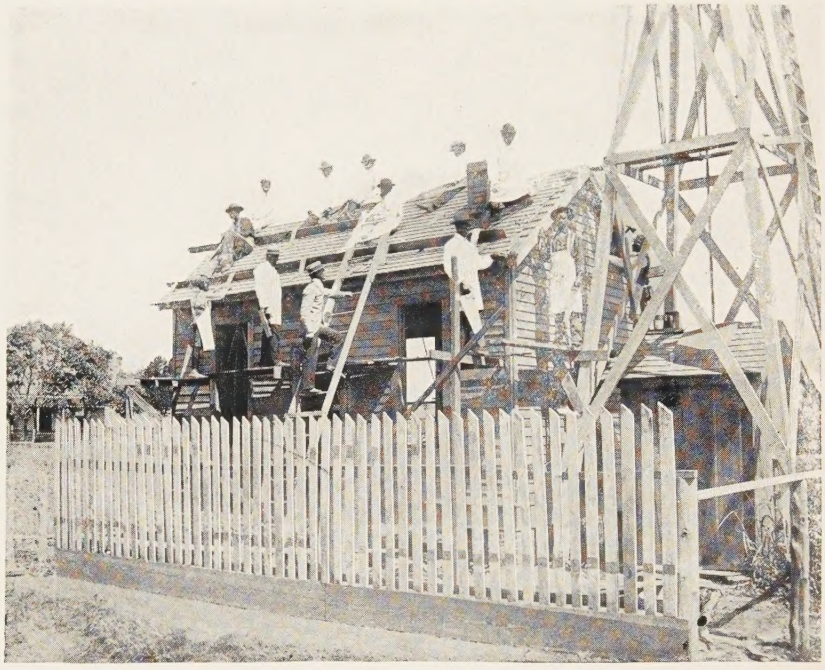
Industrial training both for boys and girls is to be an important feature of the work among the people of this island and promises to result in great good.

The largest volume of work is done among the negroes in the South. Here there are nearly ten million of people passing through a transition period and needing especially the wise

and sympathetic help of their white fellow citizens. Institutions presenting a complete college curriculum have been established. Not a large percentage of the colored students complete a college education. These institutions have normal and lower grades of instruction, so as to furnish the education which the majority need. Many of them have industrial departments. The higher college training, however, the Negroes are Fisk University, Nashville, Tenn.; Straight University, New Orleans, La.; Talladega College, Talladega, Ala.; Tougaloo University, Tougaloo, Miss.; Tillotson College, Austin, Texas. In addition to these institutions more than sixty normal, graded and common schools are sustained among the colored people of the South.

Churches are also planted at impor-

CLASS IN CARPENTRY AT TALLADEGA COLLEGE



is essential to the development of the strongest manhood and womanhood among this people, and can not be neglected if the best results are secured. The men and women who come from these institutions occupy prominent positions among the leaders of their people. Some of them have taken post graduate courses in northern institutions and have held a high rank among their white fellow students. The five higher institutions sustained by this association among tant points and well educated, earnest ministers are proving to be useful leaders of their people. High ethical standards, intelligent presentation of the gospel, decent and orderly worship characterize these churches.

Unique and original methods were necessary to reach the peoples in these fields. Industrial training was first introduced by this association among the Negroes. Talladega College in Alabama, a school early planted by this organization, was the first school

in the South to adopt a systematic course of manual training. Hampton Institute, then under the general care of the association, followed shortly afterward. During these years industrial instruction has been an important feature of the work in the schools of the American Missionary Association throughout the South and West.

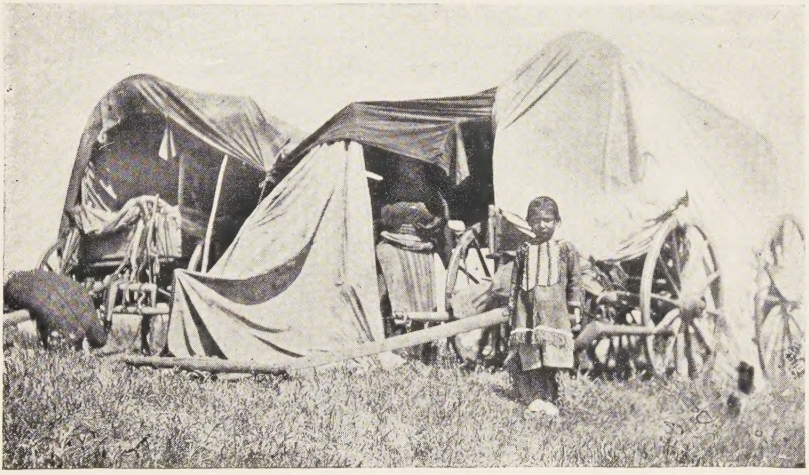
Tougaloo University, in the heart of Mississippi, furnishes excellent industrial training for the Negroes. Here 500 acres of land are cultivated by the students. Shops in which many departments of industry are taught stand on the grounds. Pupils receive a thorough training in the trades if they develop ability in any special line. They go out prepared for their life work in heart, head and hand, and are meeting the responsibilities upon them with marked success.

Among the Indians industrial instruction was also early introduced. At Santee Normal Training School, Santee, Nebraska, careful instruction in agriculture, blacksmithing, carpentering, printing and other departments of similar training are pursued. The printing press in this school has proved of great value. A New York printer who examined some of the work done by the Indian boys testified that it was "as good as any office in New York could do." Job printing is done in this school for surrounding white business men and farmers and so brings some income to the school.

In Alaska, among the Eskimo, a herd of reindeer provided by the government is under the care of the missionary who directs the work in this field. These reindeer furnish food, transportation and clothing for the Eskimo. The heroic efforts of the missionary of this association, Mr. W. T. Lopp, in rescuing the crews of seven whale ships ice-bound in the northern sea is a matter of well known history. A large herd of reindeer were driven with great speed more than 500 miles by this heroic man over the ice floes and snow fields and in face of bitter cold to bring relief to these imprisoned men. The act of the United States government in commending Mr. Lopp for this splendid effort was thoroughly merited and was a practical comment upon the sound and wise methods of modern missionary work carried on among the Eskimo.

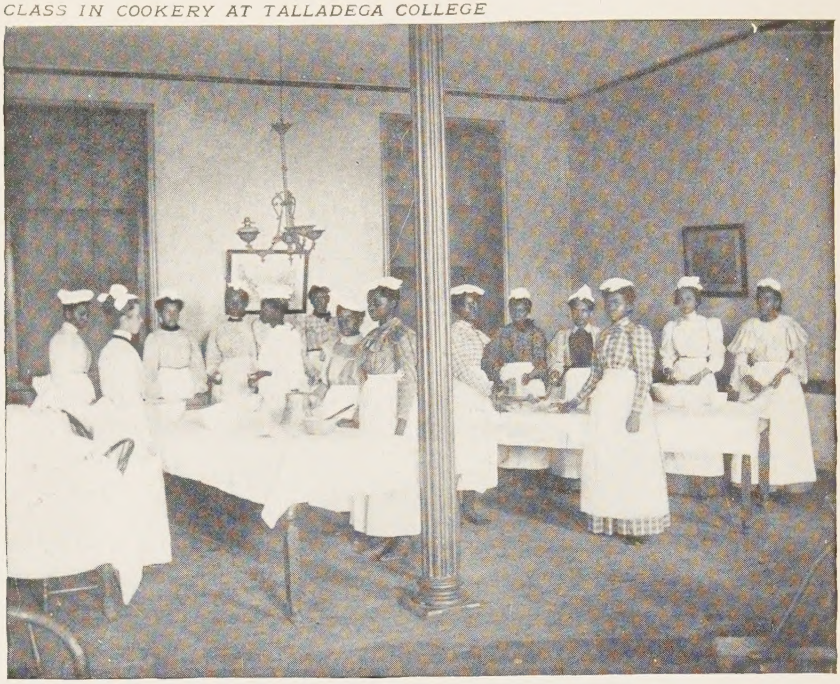
Industries for the girls are also im-

CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHOE INDIANS ON THE ROAD



portant departments of instruction in these schools. In some schools this work is so graded that when a girl has completed her education she is qualified for some branch of work as seamstress and dressmaker, or as a milliner. Kitchen gardening, care of the fruit, cooking and nursing are taught the girls in many of these institutions. Among the Highlanders industrial training is also a prominent feature of instruction.

CLASS IN COOKERY AT TALLADEGA COLLEGE



Industrial work in behalf of the colored people originated with the American Missionary Association. President Booker T. Washington, who has emphasized it, is a graduate of Hampton Institute, and Hampton was founded by the association. The college or social settlement also was early introduced by the American Missionary Association in the prosecution of its work. Before even the terms of sociology were cast or scarcely any agitation with regard to movements of this kind was known, the association established work of this nature throughout the South. Indeed, almost every mission was a college settlement. The teachers entered into the life of the people. Teachers' homes were built in the very heart of the neediest sections of the city or in the great black belt of the South or amid the tepees of the Indians in the West or the Chinese of the Pacific slope.

In San Francisco a mission house stands just where it is most needed and most accessible to the Chinese of Chinatown. Under the able direction of a local committee and superintendent the work is far-reaching and important. A native pastor, Rev. Lee Gam, cares for the people at this mission with tireless energy and loving sympathy. The mission house furnishes rooms for Chinese men who may

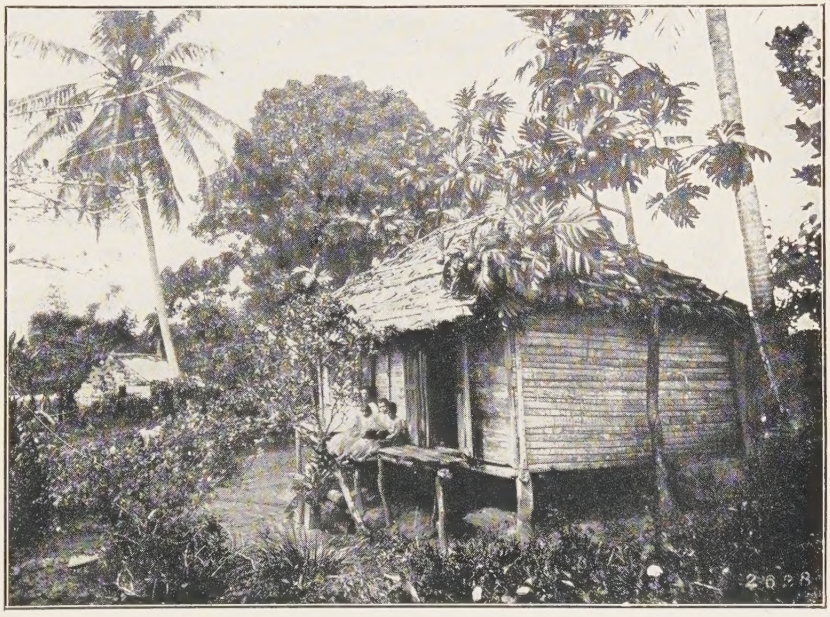
need such accommodations. A small price is charged which goes to the support of the mission. The home of the pastor is under the same roof. The influence of this work, planted in this strategic point to reach the 100,000 Chinese and Japanese on the Pacific coast, cannot be measured. Already missionaries have been educated here who have gone to China to carry the gospel to their own people. The principle that "native missionaries and not foreign missionaries must finally solve the great problems facing us in China," is more and more gaining belief.

The Rev. Jee Gam and his associates have made noteworthy contributions recently through the American Board for the relief fund to be used in North China.

But all these peculiar peoples among whom this association works need trained teachers of their own race. It makes, therefore, prominent normal instruction. A large number of the teachers in the public schools of the South among the Negroes and among the Highlanders were educated in these schools. These teachers are trained in the best modern methods, and almost universally go out from the parent school with profound Christian conviction and high standards.

Churches are planted beside the school. The newer generation in the South demands these churches in which an intelligent and devoted minister shall present thoughtful discourses. The old-time noise and confusion, excitement and shouting, which although containing an element of real worship often excited quite other emotions than those of devotion, are giving place to more thoughtful but none the less sincere worship. The churches organized are largely under the care of native pastors. The methods of church organization, so far as possible, throw the responsibility upon the church membership, thus developing self-direction and self-support. The great work of the association marks an epoch in history.

A "SHACK." HOME OF A PORTO RICAN PEASANT



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